

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ADANA 0142

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE AND NEA/NGA
AND PRM

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [TU](#) [ADANA](#)

SUBJECT: SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY HOPEFUL FOR
CHANGE BUT EXPERIENCING LITTLE
IMPROVEMENT

(U) This cable is sensitive but unclassified;
please protect accordingly.

1. (SBU) Summary: A cross-section of GOT officials, NGOs, and businessmen in Turkey's Southeast reveals little, if any, change in economic or social conditions. Lower-level GOT officials, unaccustomed to and uncomfortable with meeting foreign diplomats, paint an unrealistic picture, touting the Southeast as a model for other developing countries. Many of these officials assert that economic conditions are improving and were not affected by the recent war in Iraq and that human rights violations rarely occur. However, according to our NGO contacts, the economic situation remains stagnant and social conditions have not changed since the third EU reform package was passed in August 2002. Kurdish contacts anticipate a resolution of Kurdish-Turkish tensions. However, they associate this resolution with increased US participation and continue to think that the rise in awareness of the Kurdish problem in the international arena is a major step in compelling Ankara to begin serious efforts to mend ties with citizens of Kurdish origin. End summary.

Mid-Level Civil Servants Report An Easy Life,
Fear of Superiors, and a Party Line .

2. (SBU) Poloff met with a wide variety of provincial education and health directors, sub-governors, and local NGOs and prominent citizens in Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, Hilvan, and Diyarbakir between May 13-16. While most of our scheduled appointments were eager to meet with us, some provincial education and health directors did not appear or sent their deputies to meet with us. As it was explained, either the directors were "in another meeting" or they did not have the permission of their superiors to meet with us. Often, the deputies were enthusiastic to discuss their roles, workplaces, and issues relating to working in the Southeast. Aside from these contacts, many of those who did meet with us gave an identical, too rosy picture of conditions in the Southeast: in the health system, almost every child is immunized, birth control and population control is taught, there are no language or communication barriers, and there is adequate health care in each village; in the education system, all children are provided schooling and high school attendance is on the rise, there are no language or communication barriers, and technology is the only thing lacking in their schools.

... But Lower Level Contacts Bemoan Bureaucratic
Nightmares

3. (SBU) In contrast, the deputies assigned to speak with us often portrayed a different picture. In Diyarbakir's Social Security Hospital, the hospital director spoke of

bureaucratic nightmares in which he had been corresponding with his central ministry in Ankara in order to fix a broken piece of equipment for three months and still had yet to receive the funding to repair it. According to procedures, all appointments must be made through an appointment system; however, many women speak only Kurdish and are unable to obtain an appointment on their own. Often, these women must rely on a male family member to translate and choose not to receive medical care if the condition is of a private nature. The central headquarters also seems to place a higher emphasis on new buildings, rather than staff; Sanliurfa's State Hospital is expected to move into a new 500-bed hospital in August 2003 but, according to its deputy chief doctor, "while it will be nice to have a new facility, it is even more important to have a full staff." Nurses are in high demand and the shortage is so great that ten nurses (of the 100 employed at this hospital) miscarried due to the strenuous load of hours they worked. Sanliurfa's deputy chief doctor summed up the situation by stating, "the only efficient system within the GOT is the military; if the GOT adopted a similar system to healthcare, we would have the capability to utilize our resources to effectively care for our patients." Many of our health contacts also expressed optimistic skepticism for the Ministry of Health's plans to refresh Turkey's healthcare system: "we have heard it before but will be pleased to see it happen this time."

14. (SBU) The education system also shares some language problems but the primary issue remains attracting girls to school and getting all students to continue to high school. In Hilvan, there are approximately 9700 students attending school; of these roughly 500 attend secondary school while 9200 attend the compulsory primary school. The Provincial Education director attributes this wide discrepancy to wealthier parents sending their children to school in Sanliurfa. (Note: Hilvan is not known to be a wealthy province and poloff noticed more horses and carts than cars in the city center. End note.) Girls have begun to enter school but some of our contacts estimate that 70 percent of the region's female population remains illiterate. In one of Diyarbakir's newest high schools, the principal spends approximately half of his time soliciting local businesses and the Ministry of Education for money and equipment to outfit his school.

Still a Man's World

15. (SBU) Almost every NGO contacted stated that the human rights situation in Southeastern Turkey had not changed for the better after the EU reform package was passed in August 2002 or, for that matter, in the last five years. Kurdish language broadcasting, guaranteed under the EU reform package, still has yet to be seen in a regular, unobstructed way and activists often cite conflicting laws within the GOT and general GOT unwillingness as primary reasons. Prison guards often disconnect inmates and family members who speak in Kurdish during visiting hours. Torture continues freely against inmates accused of being PKK-affiliated; although the torture inflicted is often more mental than physical and the physical beatings are confined to those that will leave the least lasting physical effects.

16. (SBU) According to KA-MER, a Diyarbakir-based woman's group, suicides amongst women and girls are on the rise in the Southeast, especially in Diyarbakir and Batman. KA-MER worries, that because these deaths are rarely investigated, many of them could be honor killings designed to look like suicides. According to KA-MER's founder, the lack of education combined with economic hardships and a strict religion propels many families to take this drastic action against their daughters who have or have been perceived to bring dishonor to the family. The organization applauds the local

municipality for its help in arranging replacement identification cards to women who have sought KA-MER's protection. Women in Southeastern Turkey continue to play a traditional, uneducated role and remain tied to the male members of the family's wishes for food, shelter, and education.

A Renewed Kurdish Hope

17. (SBU) Kurds living in Southeastern Turkey describe to us a cautious hope for a resolution to what they see as their main problems because it appears the Kurds will play a role in the new Iraqi government and their situation has been propelled to the international arena. However, our contacts frequently warn that, without US support, a resolution will not happen. "We support the US war in Iraq but we also support the GOT's failure to pass the February motion allowing US troops in Iraq because, had the government passed the motion, Turkish troops would have moved into Northern Iraq and the Kurdish role would have diminished."

Comment

18. (SBU) Officials' apprehension, or failure, to meet with us and the deliverance of the same party line given to us by many GOT bureaucrats portrays a strong fear of repercussion by their superiors. It is curious to note how some of our appointments would usher us out the door after a few minutes of small talk in order not to be accused of discussing something inappropriate. In meetings with higher level officials, including the new Diyarbakir governor, we were given a biased, but clearer view of the region: "there are still problems, namely within healthcare and education, but our situation is improving daily." Also, we heard that many mid-level GOT bureaucrats often choose to extend their tours in the region because of the "easy way of life." They are often provided added monetary incentives and enjoy an elite standing in the province. These officials frequently seem satisfied with the status quo and seemed to prefer not taking the extra steps it would require to improve much of their territory because it could potentially upset their way of life. End Comment.
HOLTZ